



SHOWCASE '96

GUARDIAN & FIREBRAND
DR. FATE & THE SHADE • THE DEMON

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M

METROPOLIS ISN'T MY
USUAL HAUNT, I'M
MOSTLY A BIG APPLE
BOY...

...BUT WHEN WORD OF THE
GANG OF WILDLY MARAUDING
TEENAGERS TEARING UP
SUPERMAN'S HOMETOWN,
REACHED ME, I HAD TO
COME.

FOR TWO WEEKS, THESE
SAVAGE KIDS HAD BEEN
SWEEPING OUT OF THE
NIGHT ON ERRANDS OF
APPARENTLY RANDOM
DESTRUCTION-

ONLY TO VANISH
BACK INTO THE
CITY'S SHADOWS
BEFORE THEY CAN
BE STOPPED, OR
QUESTIONED.

GET
AWAY FROM
THOSE
KIDS, YOU
FREAK!!

GREAT, IT WAS
THE GUARDIAN,
ONE OF THE OLD
GUARD HEROES...

...AND THANKS TO
THIS HORROR-SHOW
FIREBRAND RIG, I
MUST'VE LOOKED SO
NOT LIKE ONE OF
HIS LODGE BUDDIES.

WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN WORKING
TOGETHER TO FIGURE OUT THE
STORY HERE. WE SHOULD HAVE
GONE AFTER WHOEVER WAS
RESPONSIBLE.

AND WE WOULD... AS SOON AS
WE WERE DONE WITH THE...

FIGHT SCENE.

THE DEVIL'S OWN

HE SLAMMED INTO ME
LIKE THE BIG OUT OF
LARCHMONT, AND I KNEW
I WAS IN FOR A LONG
NIGHT.

BRIAN AUGUSTYN - SCOT EATON - PRENTIS ROLLINS
writer pencilerinker
DAVE GRAPE - KEN BRUZENAK - CHRIS DUFFY
coloristlettererassistant god
FRANK PITTARESE
editor

Firebrand created
by Brian Augustyn
& Sol Velluto

zummgg-!

KATANGA!









AND I
THINK WE
BOTH AGREE
THAT
SOMEONE'S
TAKING
ADVANTAGE
OF THESE
KIDS.

LET'S SEE
IF WE CAN
PICK UP A
TRAIL...

...AND SMASH
WHATEVER RAT-
BAG WE FIND
AT THE END."

WHAT'S
TAKING SO
LONG?
WHERE ARE
THEY??

BLASTED
MIND-SLAVES...
DO WHATEVER YOU
COMMAND, BUT YOU
CAN'T MAKE THEM
RUSH.

MEANWHILE,
I'VE GOT A
LIMITED WINDOW
OF MYSTICAL
OPPORTUNITY
THREATENING TO
SLAM SHUT
AT ANY
MOMENT!

THIS
IS WHAT I
GET FOR
USING
INFERIOR
TOOLS!

WHAH!
WHAH!
WE GOT
HERE?





"WHAT A MESS, OUR
KIDS HAVE BEEN LITERALLY
THROUGH HERE."









THE FINAL
RITUAL WILL BRING
THE OLD ONES
HERE TO COLLECT
MY FINAL
TRIBUTE...

...MY
GIFT OF
YOUR
SOULS!

THEN I
WILL BE ENTHRONED—
AND NO ONE WILL EVER
MISS A BUNCH OF LOWER
CLASS LOSERS
LIKE YOU!

NOW
TO PROGRAM
THE LAST
SPELL SEQUENCE.

THIS IS...
BAD
LET'S GO!!

RIGHT
BEHIND YOU,
FIREBAND--
LET'S CRUSH
THIS LITTLE
DEVIL!

RIGHT—
GIVE 'EM
HELL!!









I WRITE THIS AS A MEANS OF ANALYZING WHAT HAPPENED THEN.

THOUGH YEARS HAVE PASSED, I SEE NOW THAT THE OCCURRENCES OF THAT DAY RESONATE STILL IN RECENT EVENTS, AND I FEAR THAT THEY MAY BE OF EVEN MORE CONCERN IN EVENTS YET TO TRANSPIRE.

THE HERO I MET AND FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THEM, IS DEAD.

I STILL THINK OF HIM OFTEN, THOUGH, HOW, PERHAPS, JUST PERHAPS, IT WAS HIS LIGHT THAT TOUCHED ME IN SOME WAY, AND SLOWLY SO CAN THE CHANGE IN MY MORALITY BE NOT TO WHITE... AT LEAST TO A SLIGHTER, LIGHTER SHADE OF GRAY.

PERHAPS.

WHATEVER, LET ME FINALLY RECORD THE EVENTS THAT MYSELF AND THE HERO SHARED,

WHICH BEGAN, IRONICALLY, WITH MY... "ENCOUNTERING" ... ANOTHER HERO...

WHO NOW ALAS IS ALSO DEAD.

GIVE IT UP, SHADE! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE!





"I REALIZED
I WAS GOING TO
GET THEM."

FEAR
NOT SHADE.
I MEAN YOU
NO HARM.

REALLY?
OH, I AM
RELIEVED.

THE STANDARD DRAMA
TEAM OF THE TIMES PAST

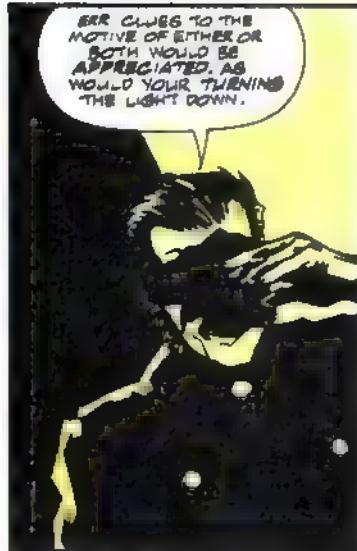
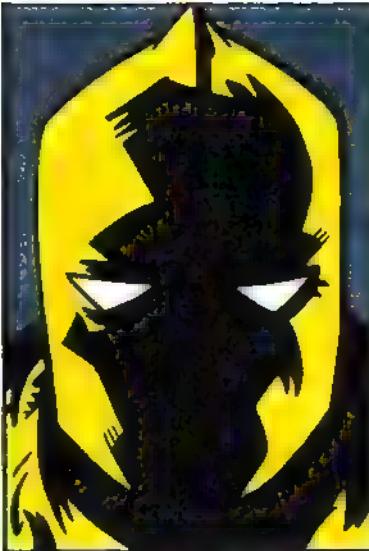
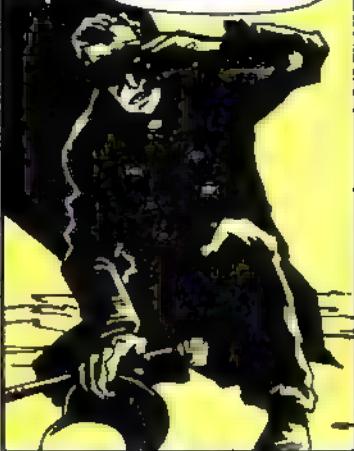
DAY & NIGHT, NIGHT & BRIGHT

JAMES ROBINSON - WRITER
MATT SMITH - ART
MELISSA EDWARDS - COLORIST
CHRIS CLAMPOROS - LETTERER
EDDIE XIAO - EDITOR

REVIEWS

WELL,
THIS IS
NICE.

AM I TO BELIEVE
YOU'RE HELPING ME
ESCAPE? OR IS THIS
THE BEGINNING OF
ANOTHER BATTLE?



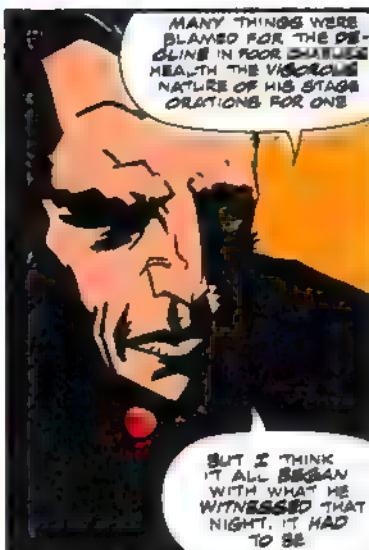
THERE ARE WRITINGS...
OBSCURE...ONE BURIED IN
A CATHEDRAL LIBRARY IN
PRAGUE. THE OTHER AMONG
THE BOOKS OF MAGIC OF
MY ACQUAINTANCE IN
VENICE. THE WRITINGS
BREAK IN THE KAGUEZ
OF TIME...



YES, I KNOW OF IT.
THOUGH CHARLES TOLD
ME HE'D DESTROYED THE
WORK, HE WENT ON TO
WRITE A DIFFERENT BOOK
ABOUT THE CHARACTERS
OF THAT NIGHT

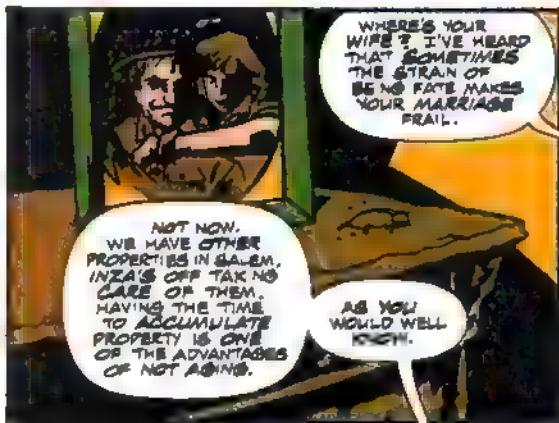


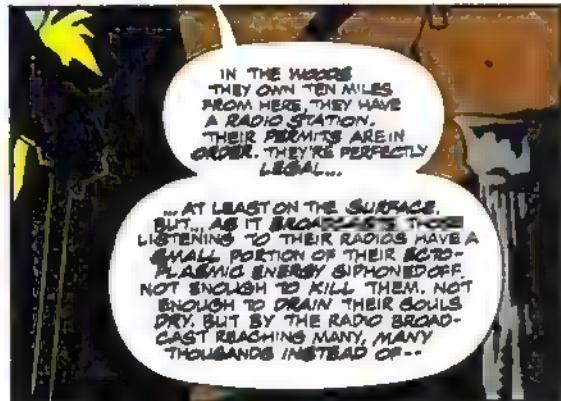
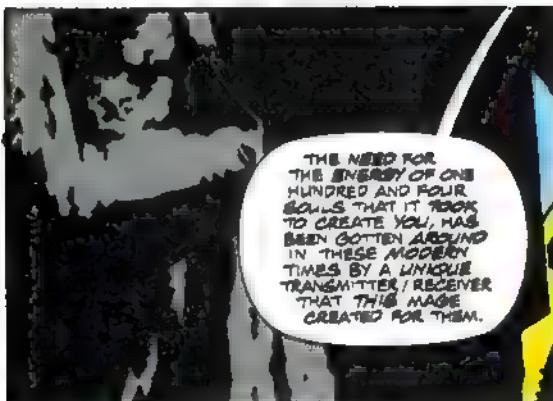
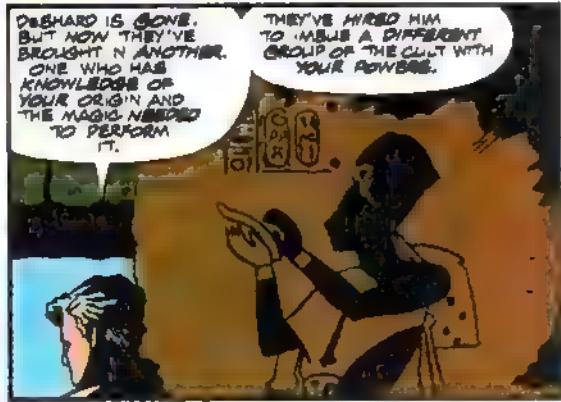
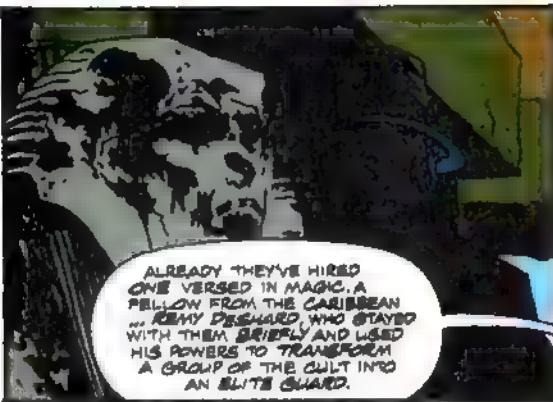
A FICTION.
HE NEEDED
SOME KIND OF
CATHARSIS,
AND I SUPPOSE
THAT WAS AS
GOOD AS IT
GOT FOR HIM.

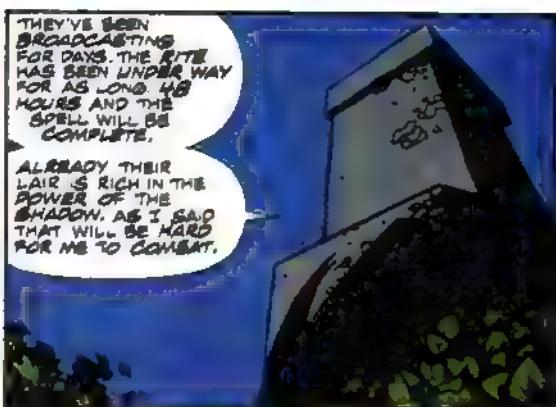


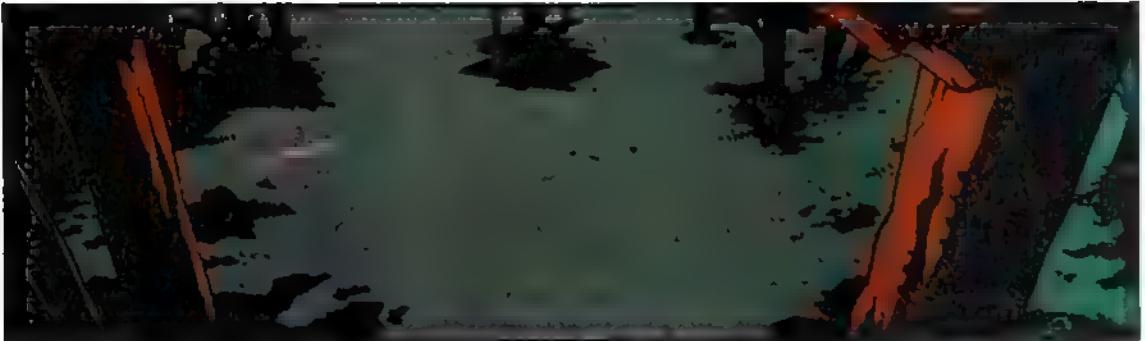
BUT I THINK
IT ALL BEGAN
WITH WHAT HE
WITNESSED THAT
NIGHT. IT HAD
TO BE











"IT'S WHAT'S
INSIDE THAT
MATTERS."

"AND WITH
THAT..."

"WE BEGAN
OUR DESCENT."

TO BE
CONTINUED...

LONDON, ENGLAND.
THE PRESENT



IN THE YEAR 560 A.D.,
JASON BLOOD WAS
HAPPY. HE LOVED HIS
WIFE AND HIS CHILDREN
DEARLY. HE HAD ALL
HIS TEETH.



THE
DOOR'S OPEN?
DID I SLEEP
WALK?



THEN MERLIN BONDED
THE BLACKHEARTED
DEMON ETIGRAN TO
HIS SOUL.



BECAUSE, YOU SEE...

—MY
HEAD...

—WHERE
AM I?





SUCH
BLISTER AND FURY,
AND ALL OVER WHAT?
I DID NOTHING TO GET
YOU TO THE PLACES
YOU GOT.



DON'T PLAY
INNOCENT WITH ME,
ETRIGAN. THIS REEKS
OF YOUR SCHEMING.
WHAT DID YOU DO
TO ME?

REK, SO
YOU SAYS, BUT
I THINK OF IT
NOW--IF I WAS
INVOLVED, YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
TO ASK
NOW.



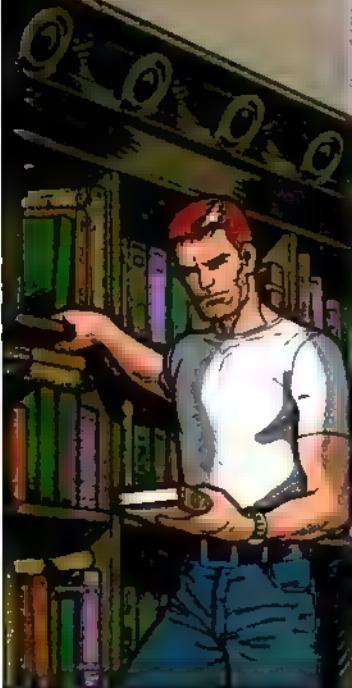
IF IT
HURTS MY DOING,
YOU'D SENSE MY
HANO, YOU'D WAKE
SMELLING BRIMSTONE,
YOU'D KNOW OF
MY PLAN.

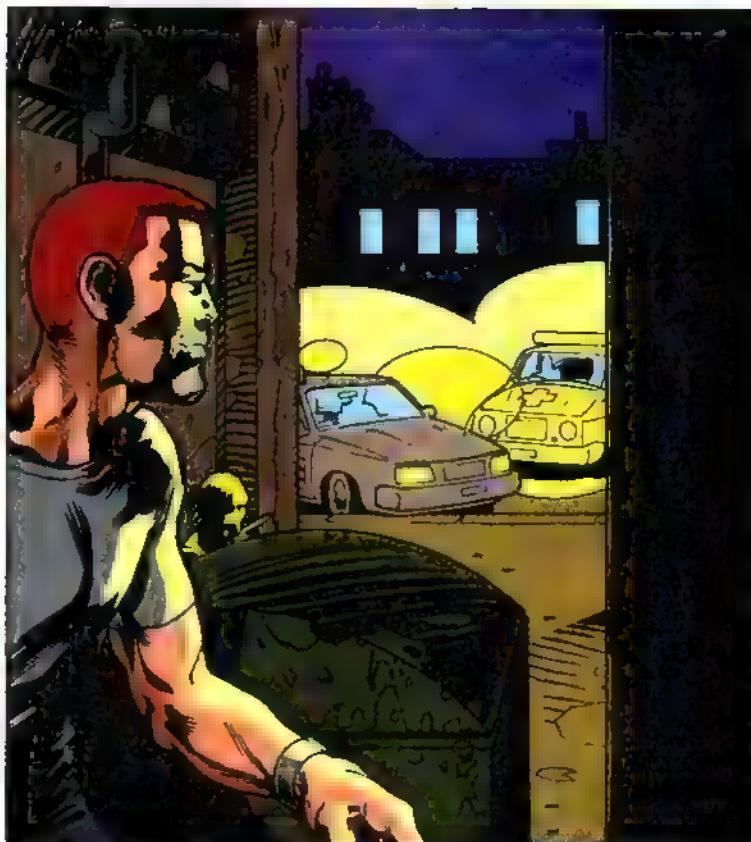
I
PROBABLY
WOULD SENSE
YOUR PRESENCE,
SOME WAY. BUT
IT STILL SEEMS
LIKE ONE OF
YOUR DARN
GAMES.

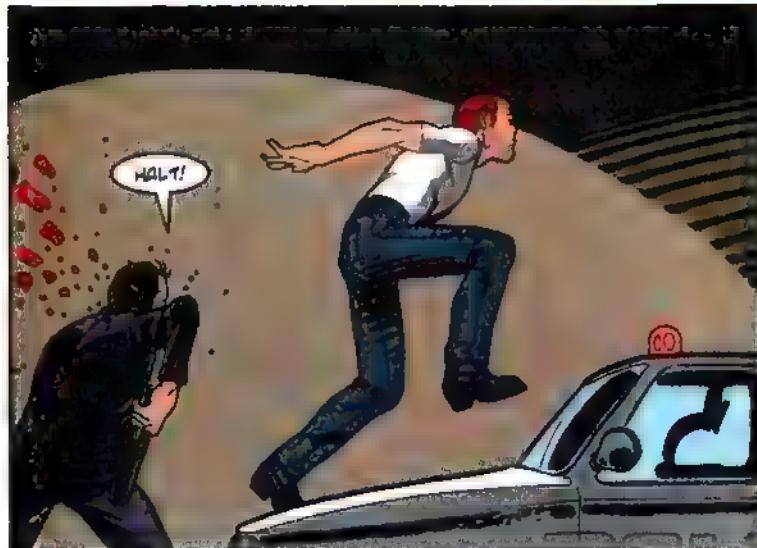
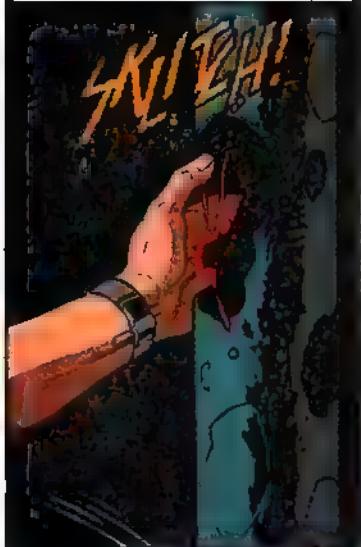
WHAT'S
LIKELY, FRIEND
BLOD, WHAT YOU
DON'T WANT TO FACE,
IS YOU'RE LOSING
YOUR MIND, AND
YOU'RE A FAIR
CASE.



BLOOD'S SOLUTION IS STUDY-
BPSYCHOLOGY, MYSTIC TEXTS,
NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS.

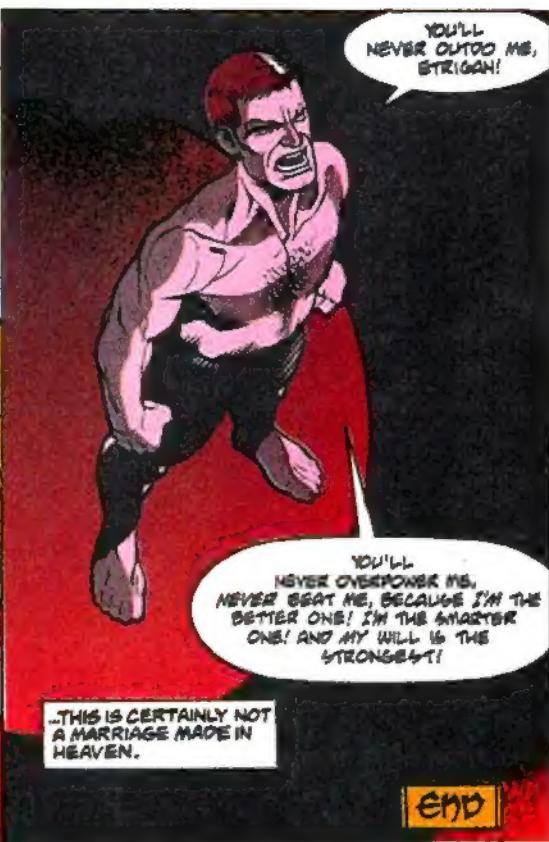
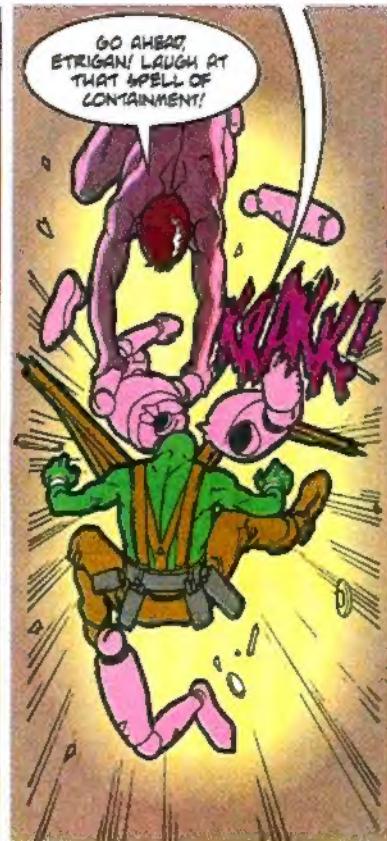












CASE STUDIES

All right. It was overwhelming. We here at Case Studies had no idea how many fans Garth...er....Aqualad...I mean Tempest has out there. Without a doubt, the most popular and eagerly-awaited story of the issue was "Charted Courses," finally letting readers know what happened to Garth. Well, there's a lot more. This is just the tip of the iceberg. More on this later. Let's get to the mail!

Dear Jason,

A new year, a new SHOWCASE edition, and a bunch of new and entertaining new features. If SHOWCASE '96 #1 is any indication of what's in store for the rest of the new year, I'd say this year's edition could just as well stand a chance when it comes to topping last year's incredible set of fascinating short stories presented in these pages.

"Friends, Foes, and the Other Guys," was an interesting story to kick off the new year. Not only was it a sight for sore eyes to see the always awe-inspiring artwork from the capable hands of Sergio Cariello again, it also felt good to get another taste of Beau Smith's writing style. Somehow, during the past months, most of the stories he's written have been able to tickle my fancy in quite a number of ways, and this story was a good way to see him flex some muscle again. As for the choice of characters, I'm rather happy with Steel and rather unhappy with Guy Gardner. The love for the former almost equals the feeling of dismay concerning the latter. Somehow, Guy has never been able to convince me that his character is more than just a one-dimensional fighting machine. Still, the team-up with Steel might open me up a bit for Guy, so you never know. For now—benefit of the doubt.

"Charted Courses," was the story I waited many months to see. Ever since the mystery surrounding Aqualad started in the pages of AQUAMAN, I have been on the edge of my seat. Not knowing what happened to him was slowly driving me nuts, until, of course, Phil Jimenez and Scott Kolins teamed up to bring the readers this very story—in itself a great and entertaining story, but the ramifications for the main Aquaman continuity are more important, I feel. Therefore, I'm glad Garth has been reestablished as an active character in the DC Universe. Let's see more of him in these pages too, if you will.

Finally, "All the Old Familiar Places" turned out to be a nice short story about Dan Turpin. Not only was it good to see the old man in action again, the tale also served as an intelligent way to bring Nara and Dan somewhat closer together. While I've never heard of the creative team of Clencin and Robinson before, their work is quite good,

making for a good way to end the first issue's worth of new and exciting features.

Next up is Circe? Exactly what I wanted! Geez! What are you guys—mind readers?

Olav Beemer
Brugakker 3606
3704 LP Zeist
The Netherlands
Europe

Yes, we are. I know exactly what you're thinking as you read this, Olav. You're thinking you'd love to see Garth get his own miniseries written and drawn by the multifaceted, multitalented Phil Jimenez... Well, you're lucky, 'cos this fall it'll be on the shelves of a retailer near you! (Told you I could read your mind!)

Dear Jason,
Re: SHOWCASE '96 #1

Collecting only the Superman line, I'm happy to see his supporting cast featured here again this year. On the other hand, I'm also glad to see them in team-ups this time around, since several of the previous installments fell a little flat. If nothing else, the pairings will give this book a separate Identity from '95's. I was going to suggest cutting the book down to two features by expanding the lead (two heroes and all), but then I thought about variety being the spice of life, and... without further delay, my review (best to least best) of a slightly above average issue.

"Charted Courses." The fact that I do not follow AQUAMAN on a regular basis completely failed to spoil my enjoyment of this wonderfully basic Phil Jimenez script. The art by Scott Kolins was similarly simple, translating into clear and concise visuals. Congratulations to Scott on his rendering of Garth's black outfit. Not an easy task.

"Friends, Foes, and the Other Guys." While more of a Warrior story than Steel's, I still enjoyed it, even though (once again) I do not read Guy's book. The story, art, and villains strongly reminded me of a late '70s/early '80s Marvel book...er, let me rephrase that: a good '70s/80s Marvel book. Nothing wrong with that.

"All the Old Familiar Places." Much better than I anticipated, people. It's always a treat to see Terrible Turpin solo, but it looks like he won't be that way much longer. About time. Scot Clencin introduced a rather contrived-looking villainess with Tengu, but sidestepped (for the most part) that short-story trap by not allowing Overlord's sword to stop her. The Robinson/Nyberg art added a little polish to an otherwise boring setting. And by the way, Legion Run?

The cover: Excellent in-your-face design, but I've seen better execution in my

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day. Thank you for removing the lead feature's logo though. It isn't really needed, and with a team-up every issue, it could get a little busy.

Chris Hines
79B Centennial Dr.
Truro, NS B2N 5J8

Glad you like where we're going so far, Chris. Hang on—it's just going to get wetter and wilder as the year goes on!

Jason—

First off—Sergio Cariello's pencils were not up to his usual standards. Was it the inking? Did he only provide layouts?

Now let's move on to one of my favorite DC characters—Aqualad. What is he called? Garth? Tempest? He needs a new name. Tempest (if this is his new name) just doesn't do it for me. He also needs a new costume.

Let's see more of Garth here. We need to learn about his new powers and his new role in the DCU. I'd love to see the Sharkgirl in his adventures. Let's have more adventures of Garth in SHOWCASE!

Ed Homa, Jr.
9 N. Avon Dr.
Claymont, DE 19703

All your wishes will come true this fall, Ed (trust me, I'm a mind reader); however, since we know a lot of you guys will keel over with anticipation before the miniseries even comes out, you can check out current and upcoming issues of AQUAMAN for more on Garth...a lot more on Garth.

Dear Metropolis C.S.U. (Case Studies Unit),

I've been looking forward to finding out the final fate of Aqualad for quite some time now. After his horrifying, mutilated exit from AQUAMAN #9, I was surprised to see that in "Charted Courses" he'd undergone a change for the better! In fact, Garth may need a code name now that this rite of passage has changed him from a boy to a man. I definitely like his new powers and mission, and I think I can get used to his new look (although the scars and short hair do remind me a bit of

Chakotay from TV's Star Trek: Voyager). I had no idea that Phil Jimenez is a skilled writer as well as an artist. He did a fantastic job with the script, and Scot Kolins did an equally fantastic job with the art, making this my favorite story in this issue. For only ten pages, it had a lot of impact! I can't wait to see the new Garth confront Aquaman in his own title.

Likewise, "Terrible" Dan Turpin has been Maggie Sawyer's right-hand man in the S.C.U. for so long now, that it's time he got his share of the spotlight. "All the Old Familiar Places" was delightful because it showed Dan's tough exterior in fighting the lady demon Tengu while showing his sensitive interior as he dealt with his inner demons and his next door neighbor, Nora. The art by Roger Robinson and John Nyberg, enhanced by colorist Roberta Tewes, was exceptionally good. It reminded me a lot of Rick Burchett's animated style in the BLACKHAWK series of some years back.

You can't have super-hero comics without slugfests and bar-room brawls, hence this issue's lead battle. I've always liked STEEL ever since his first appearance, and the conflict with the two guy Gardners has me interested. Throw in the steroid-overdosed Sledge along with Sergio Cariello and Rob Leigh's artwork, and you've got me looking forward to Part Two.

Since SHOWCASE '96 will concentrate on teaming Superman's supporting cast with other DC characters, I have only one request: Let's see The Thorn team up with The Batman! What do you think?

Till next issue,
Neil Ahlquist
Minneapolis, Minn.

What do I think? I think it sounds cool, although not as cool as a Thorn/Poison Ivy team-up...or a Thorn/Green Arrow team-up (which is what you're gonna get in two months as the lead feature in SHOWCASE '96!) All right, kiddies, that's it for this month. See you next time...

Jason Hernandez-Rosenblatt
—Wishing the Sharkgirl were my Valentine...

NEXT ISSUE



Green Arrow and Thorne cross paths, and a child's life hangs in the balance, when a sniper takes aim at an airport in a story by Darren Vincenzo, Steve Erwin, and Gerry Fernandez. Plus, The Shade and the original Dr. Fate...in a story by James Robinson and Matt Smith, and in an untold tale of the New Gods, the dark secret behind the creation of the celestial city is revealed in a tale by Rachel Pollack, Jason Armstrong and Brian Garvey. All that and a cover by Mike Zeck!